Ruffle

JFK and King assassination and PA records appeals Harold Weisberg 1/15/80
Informants
Robert Ruffle
Withholding of what is disclosed in Warren Commission records

While the records to which I refer below are of the JFK assassination investigation the principles apply to the King case and all relates to a PA appeal on which you have not acted.

There is no question about the right and need to protect authentically confidential informants, those who provide real information as distinguished from their own fabrications for their own purposes. You will, I am confident, recall that I have notified you and the FBI of what I believed to be inadvertent disclosures of informant identification so that reading room copies could be replaced with those not making identification disclosure.

Serial 3442 is one of many HQ-62555 records relating to Robert Ruffle, an informant of the San Francisco police and the FBI. My earlier appeals relating to him include records from other files. With regard to this Serial I also appeal the withholdings by excision.

Although I perceived that Ruffle was an informant before locating FBI records in which it discloses this fact and I believe - then as cited, [redacted] records do include his identification, by name and role while others add confusion and can cause harm to others because of the withholdings of what the FBI itself discloses.

FBIHQ's reason for disclosing Ruffle's identification is stated in Serial 3442: "Bureau questions the veracity...and in light of Ruffle's expressions of sympathy for [redacted] Castro Bureau does not desire to protect his identity (obliteration)".

FBIHQ was correct in questioning Ruffle's veracity when he reported that one Arnold Neesler had dined with Oswald in Mexico City long after Oswald had left there. The resulting investigation, which extended to South America, was quite costly and although this fairy tale had not been confirmed, it had been reported to the Warren Commission, which was influenced by it.

This parallels many situations in the King investigation, a number of which I have explained. There the FBI made selective disclosure of the identification of informants, limiting it to those it wanted the House assassinations committee to be deceived and misled by. This is what happened and now the Department's newest self-investigation is limited to this house. Curiously enough there will be a self-awarded clean bill of health.

In the King case the FBI also engaged in tricky filing, eliminating from its official file those records most embarrassing to it, like its intrusions into the legal defenses of the spy bootlegs through informants of those two are cross, Patterson and Gephart. Here it gets even trickier, with the Department's election of in camera inspection of withholdings and the Department's selection of the records to be examined by the court, which lacks knowledge of such matters as what has been disclosed, like the identifications of informants. The potential for deceiving and misleading the court is increased by your failure to act on my appeals of long ago.

With regard to Kefauver, I filed a PA appeal in which I asked for a search of all relevant files to see if he informed on me, directly or indirectly, from his having been present at a study group I was asked to address and from his association with one who was then a friend of mine. I did file FOIA requests with FBI and all field offices and while holding me to be a public person the FBI did make selective disclosure of [redacted] and defamatory records relating to me in both FOIA and PA cases.

If the FBI can withhold or disclose on the basis of its filing or distillation of views or its opinion of veracity, I do not believe it can apply this standard inconsistently, arbitrarily and capriciously in historical cases.